

**New Jersey Department of Education
Division of Student Services
Office of Program Support Services**

**Guidelines for Public Schools and Approved Charter Schools
to Observe “School Violence Awareness Week”
in Accordance with Public Law 2001, Chapter 298**

and

**Guidelines for Public School Districts and Approved Charter Schools
to File Hearing Transcripts
in Accordance with Public Law 2001, Chapter 299**

**Guidelines For Public Schools And Approved Charter Schools
To Observe “School Violence Awareness Week”
In Accordance With Public Law 2001, Chapter 298**

Summary of P.L. 2001, c. 298 – Annual School Violence Awareness Week

This statute (see pages 11 and 12 of this document) designates a School Violence Awareness Week in the state of New Jersey, supplementing chapter 36 of Titles 18A of the New Jersey Statutes. School districts must observe this week by organizing activities to prevent school violence, including, but not limited to, age-appropriate opportunities for student discussion on conflict resolution, issues of student diversity and tolerance. Law enforcement personnel must be invited to join members of the teaching staff in the discussions. Programs must also be provided for school board employees that are designated to help them recognize warning signs of school violence and to instruct them on recommended conduct during an incident of school violence.

Requirements for Schools

For the 2003-2004 school year, all public school districts and approved charter schools are required to designate a week in October as *School Violence Awareness Week*. During this week, schools must provide an opportunity for students, parents and school district and law enforcement personnel to discuss methods for keeping our schools safe from violence; to create school safety plans; and to recognize those students in need of help. Ideas to consider in promoting the importance of school safety include: 1) discussions about school policies and procedures for addressing violence and school crises; 2) identification and assessment of troubled youth; 3) parental and community involvement; 4) dissemination of informational materials; 5) infusion of violence awareness lessons into the academic curriculum; 6) character education activities that endorse respect, responsibility and tolerance; 7) keynote speakers; 8) student leaders presenting lessons on conflict resolution, peer mediation and bullying prevention; and 9) staff training for school board employees in areas of violence prevention, intervention, crisis response and related district policies and procedures. Please be aware that public school districts and approved charter schools are required to invite law enforcement personnel to participate in the discussion of methods to keep schools safe from violence.

Districts and charter schools may want to consider using federal funds under the *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act* (Title IV, Part A of the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001), consistent with their approved applications, and/or state aid funds from the New Jersey Character Education Partnership (NJCEP) Initiative to support activities conducted during School Violence Awareness Week. All activities funded under Title IV, Part A, however, must conform to the Principles of Effectiveness (Section 4115(a) of the *No Child Left Behind Act*) and all other requirements under Title IV, Part A.

On pages five to nine of this document, please find information on some available programs, publications, organizations, Web sites and suggested guidelines to consider in the planning and implementation of School Violence Awareness Week.

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**Summary of P.L. 2001, c. 299 – Public Hearings and Filing of Hearing
Transcripts on School Violence**

This statute (see pages 12 and 13 of this document) amends Section 1 of Public Law 1982, chapter 163 (Chapter 18A:17-46) to provide that at a public hearing in October of each year, the superintendent of schools must report to the board of education all acts of violence and vandalism which occurred in the school district during the previous school year. The public hearing must be transcribed and kept on file by the board of education, which is required to make the transcript available to the public. The board of education must file the transcript with the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for review. Verification of the report will be part of the state’s monitoring of the school district and the State Board of Education must adopt regulations that impose a penalty on a school employee who falsifies a report, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.3, Incident reporting of violence, vandalism and substance abuse.

Instructions for Schools

Please review the following instructions regarding the annual public hearing and the filing of hearing transcripts:

1. The chief school administrator must schedule the public hearing during the month of **October**.
2. The chief school administrator must provide a presentation to the board of education at the public hearing on all acts of violence and vandalism which occurred during the previous school year, including a report on the district’s or charter school’s verified violence and vandalism data submitted under the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS) to the NJDOE for the previous school year (2002-2003).
3. The presentation on all acts of violence and vandalism which occurred during the previous school year may be held at a regular meeting of the board of education or another meeting of the board of education for the purposes of fulfilling the requirements of P.L. 2001, c. 299.
4. The proceedings of the public hearing must be transcribed. The transcription may be a verbatim report or may be prepared in summary form. In all cases, the transcription must accurately reflect the content of the public hearing.
5. The written transcript must include the following information:
 - a) The content of the chief school administrator’s presentation to the board of education at the hearing on all acts of violence and vandalism which occurred during the previous school year, including a report on the district’s or charter school’s verified violence and vandalism data submitted under the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS) to the NJDOE for the previous school year (2002-2003); and
 - b) The contents of the comments and/or discussion that occurred at the public hearing by the attendees, regarding the chief school administrator’s presentation on all acts of violence

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and vandalism. If no discussion transpired and no comments were made, the district must indicate that “no dialogue transpired and no comments were made regarding the chief school administrator’s presentation on violence and vandalism.”

6. The chief school administrator must submit a written, signed and dated assurance that the public hearing was specifically conducted to fulfill the district’s or charter school’s legal obligation to present school violence and vandalism information to the public and to conduct public hearings on the report. The statement of assurance can be included in the minutes, as part of the transcripts or as a separate document.
7. The district must either include the transcript as part of the signed board of education meeting minutes, or submit a written, signed and dated transcript of the proceedings in addition to the board of education minutes.
8. The chief school administrator must submit a copy of the district’s or charter school’s verified annual district report submitted under the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS) from the previous year (2002-2003). Where appropriate, the NJDOE encourages superintendents to have a copy of the EVVRS incident listing report for buildings available to the public at the public hearing and on file by the board of education.
9. The board of education must keep a file of the transcript and make the transcript available to the public.
10. Mail or hand deliver one copy each of the following materials: 1) The written transcript; 2) the signed and dated board of education minutes; and 3) the district’s or charter school’s verified annual Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS) report from the previous year (2002-2003) by November 1, 2003 to the following address (Transcripts may only be mailed or hand delivered. Faxed transcripts will not be accepted.):

New Jersey Department of Education
Division of Student Services
Office of Program Support Services
100 River View Plaza, Second Floor
P.O. Box 500
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0500

Attention: V and V Hearing Transcripts

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Activity Planning

To help you plan for School Violence Awareness Week, provided below is a summary of key requirements and suggested guidelines for planning activities for school violence awareness.

Student Discussions

Schools are required to organize activities to prevent school violence, including, but not limited to, age-appropriate opportunities for student discussion on conflict resolution, issues of student diversity and tolerance. Law enforcement officers must be invited to join members of the school staff in the discussions.

School Employee Programs

Schools are also required to provide programs for school employees that are designed to help them recognize warning signs for school violence and to instruct them on policies, procedures and recommended conduct during an incident of school violence.

Considerations in Planning Activities for Students

In planning activities with students, you may want to consider the following tips:

- Organize small-group activities as opposed to large-group presentations;
- Conduct student-centered rather than adult-centered activities;
- Plan activities that are age-appropriate; and
- Provide opportunities for follow-up and processing of information received.

Resources

Provided below is a list of resources that may be helpful in planning activities for School Violence Awareness Week, as well as for improving the safety of schools.

Publications/Programs

1. Exemplary and Promising Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools Programs (2001)

To order your free copy, contact 1-877-433-7827 or visit Web site:

www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html.

This publication includes detailed descriptions of the following programs that have been identified by the United States Department of Education’s national panel of experts as being based on scientifically based research:

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Exemplary Programs

1. *Athletes Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids*
2. *CASASTART (The National Center On Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University)*
3. *Life Skills Training*
4. *OSLC (Oregon Social Learning Center) Treatment Foster Care*
5. *Project ALERT*
6. *Project Northland*
7. *Project T.N.T.: Towards No Tobacco use*
8. *Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum*
9. *The Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14*

Promising Programs

1. *Aggression Replacement Training*
2. *Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders: Thinking and Acting to Prevent Violence*
3. *Al’s Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices*
4. *All Stars (Core Program)*
5. *Caring School Community Program*
6. *Community of Caring*
7. *Creating Lasting Family Connections*
8. *Facing History and Ourselves*
9. *Growing Healthy*
10. *I Can Problem Solve*
11. *Let Each One Touch One Mentor Program*
12. *Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT)*
13. *Lions-Quest Skills for Adolescence*
14. *Lions-Quest Working Toward Peace*
15. *Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education*
16. *Minnesota Smoking Prevention Program*
17. *Open Circle Curriculum*
18. *PeaceBuilders*
19. *The Peacemakers Program: Violence Prevention for Students in Grades 4-8*
20. *Peers Making Peace*
21. *Positive Action*
22. *Preparing for the Drug-Free Years*
23. *Primary Mental Health Project*
24. *Project STAR*
25. *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)*
26. *Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP)*
27. *Say It Straight Training*
28. *SCARE Program*
29. *Skills, Opportunity, and Recognition (SOAR)*

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30. *Students Managing Anger and Resolution Together (SMART) Team*
31. *Social Decision Making and Problem Solving*
32. *Teenage Health Teaching Modules*
33. *The Think Time Strategy*
2. **Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe Schools.** National Center for Children Exposed to Violence, Child Study Center, Yale University. Provides guides for teachers, administrators and parents about how to talk to children about violence. Visit: www.nccev.org/resources.
3. **Threat Assessment in Schools.** United States Department of Education, Educational Publications Center, Jessup, MD. To get a free copy, contact toll free (877) 433-7827 or download a copy on www.ed.gov/about/ordering.jsp or www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP.
4. **Youth and Violence: Students Speak Out for a More Civil Society.** Families and Work Institute. Multi-dimensional program and curricula resources to help youth, parents and educators to address violence with resiliency and hope. Visit: www.911AsHistory.org
5. **Impact of Disaster On Children In Our Schools: A Program for School Nurses.** Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Education and Training Division, Center of Alcohol Studies, Piscataway, NJ. To request a free copy of the CD and/or videotape contact (732) 445-4317.
6. **When Terrible Things Happen: A Parent’s Guide to Talking with Their Children.** Johnson and Johnson Pediatric Institute, Elk Grove Village, Ill. To download a free copy of this guide, visit www.jjpi.com. For additional information and questions, contact the Institute at toll free (800) 433-9016 or visit www.aap.org.
7. **Safe and Sound: An Educational Leader’s Guide to Evidenced-Based Social and Emotional Learning Programs.** The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Psychology. To preview and/or download this pre-publication version and additional resources, visit www.casel.org/.
8. **Helping Children Deal With Scary News.** PBS Kids, Family Communications, New York, NY. To download a free copy, visit www.pbskids.org/rogers/parents/
For more information for parents, visit www.pbs.org/americaresponds/parents.html
For more information for educators, visit: www.pbs.org/americaresponds/educators.html
9. **Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools.** United States Department of Education, Educational Publications Center, Jessup, MD. To get a free copy, contact toll free at (877) 433-7827 or download a copy on www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP or www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP.

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10. **Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide.** United States Department of Education, Educational Publications Center, Jessup, MD. To get a free copy, contact toll free (877) 433-7827 or download a copy on www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP or www.ed.gov/about/ordering.jsp.
11. **A Guide for the Development of A Districtwide School Safety Plan.** New Jersey Department of Education, Trenton, NJ. To download a copy visit www.state.nj.us/education and click on *Subjects A-Z*, click on *A*.
12. **Safe, Supportive and Successful Schools Step by Step,** Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice. This free document is available only in draft form at this time. For further information, contact <http://cecp.air.org>.
13. **Developing and Maintaining Safe Schools.** North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, Naperville, ILL. For a free copy, visit www.ncrel.org/sdrs/issues.htm, click on *Safe and Drug Free* or visit www.ncrel.org for additional resources.
14. **Managing Sudden Traumatic Loss in the Schools.** Maureen M. Underwood, LCSW and Karen Dunne-Maxim, MS, RN. To purchase a copy of the five-part videotape series or the manual, contact the American Association of Suicidology, Washington, DC at 202-237-2280 or to order online, visit www.preventsuicidenow.org/specialpopulations.htm and look under *Schools*. The association home page is www.suicidology.org.
15. **Safe Schools: A Handbook for Practitioners.** National Institute for Safe Schools, Alexandria Virginia. To obtain a copy, the National Institute for Safe Schools at (866) 711-NISS.

Organizations And Web Sites Of Interest

American School Counselor Association

Listing of resources and additional links.

www.schoolcounselor.org

New Jersey School Counselor Association

Listing of resources and additional links.

www.njsca.org

National Education Association

Listing of resources and additional links.

www.nea.org

New Jersey Education Association

Listing of resources and additional links.

www.njea.org

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National Association of School Psychologists

Various resources related to violence for parents and educators.

www.nasponline.org/NEAT/children_war.html

New Jersey Association of School Psychologists

Research, articles and related web sites for educators, parents, etc.

www.njasp.org

National School Public Relations Association

Various resources and additional links.

www.nspra.org

National Association of Elementary School Principals

Various resources and additional links.

www.naesp.org

Public Broadcasting System

A Guide to Children’s Grief.

www.pbs.org/wnet/onourown/terms/articles/children/html

Center for Mental Health Services

Tips for Talking About Disasters – Information for parents and social workers.

www.mentalhealth.org/cmhs/emergencyservices/after.asp

National Institute of Mental Health

Contains in-depth links on trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.

www.nimh.nih.gov/outline/responsseterrorism.cfm

Family Education Network

Listing of resources and additional links.

<http://familyeducation.com>

National Parent Teachers Association (PTA)

Various resources, activities and additional links for educators, parents and youth.

www.pta.org

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Various materials, training, research and additional resources for educators.

www.ascd.org

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Various resources dedicated to child and adolescent psychiatry.

www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/disaster.htm

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American Counseling Association

Various resources dedicated to the social and emotional development of children.

www.counseling.org

National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Various resources and research materials on this topic.

www.ncptsd.org

American Psychological Association

Various materials for educators, parents and children.

www.apa.org

Horatio Alger Association

Provides a new comprehensive national survey report of America’s youth titled, *The State of Our Nation’s Youth 2002-2003*. This back-to-school survey examines the attitudes and opinions of America’s youth.

www.horatioalger.org

New Jersey Department of Education

Administrative Code: Chapter 16, Programs to Support Student Development.

Provides parameters for health and student support services, including *Subchapter 5, School Safety*.

www.state.nj.us/njded/code/, click on *Chapter 16*.

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Applicable Statutes

NEW JERSEY STATUTES ANNOTATED
TITLE 18A. EDUCATION
SUBTITLE 6. CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS
PART 2. FACILITIES AND CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS
CHAPTER 36. CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS IN GENERAL

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-5.1

18A:36-5.1. School Violence Awareness Week

The week beginning with the third Monday in October of each year is designated as "School Violence Awareness Week" in the State of New Jersey. School districts shall observe this week by organizing activities to prevent school violence including, but not limited to, age-appropriate opportunities for student discussion on conflict resolution, issues of student diversity, and tolerance. Law enforcement personnel shall be invited to join members of the teaching staff in the discussions. Programs shall also be provided for school board employees that are designed to help them recognize warning signs of school violence and to instruct them on recommended conduct during an incident of school violence. The public hearing on violence and vandalism, required pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1982, c. 163 (C.18A:17-46) as amended by P.L.2001, c. 299 (C.18A:17-46), shall be held during this week. The Department of Education shall provide guidelines and information to boards of education for use in planning the activities in observance of the week and such funds as are necessary to pay the costs of the required activities and programs.

CREDIT(S)

[L.2001, c. 298, § 2, eff. Jan. 2, 2002.](#)

<[General Materials \(GM\)](#) - References, Annotations, or Tables>

HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES

2003 Electronic Update

2001 Legislation

L.2001, c. 298, § 1, approved Jan. 2, 2002, provides:

"1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

"a. Adolescence and early adulthood are characterized by much higher rates of both perpetration and victimization of violence than other years;

"b. Adolescents have also been shown to have higher rates than younger children and adults for both minor and serious forms of violence;

"c. In 1998, students who were ages 12 through 18 were victims of more than 2.7 million crimes at school;

"d. There were also 60 school-associated violent deaths in the United States during the 1997-98 school year, including 47 homicides;

"e. Fear of violence in schools affects attendance of students and causes attrition of staff; and

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"f. It is in the public interest of this State to designate a week in October of each year as "School Violence Awareness Week" to provide students, parents, school district and law enforcement personnel with an opportunity to discuss methods to keep our schools safe from violence, to create school safety plans, and to recognize those students in need of help."

N. J. S. A. 18A:36-5.1

NJ ST 18A:36-5.1

NEW JERSEY STATUTES ANNOTATED
TITLE 18A. EDUCATION
SUBTITLE 5. SCHOOL DISTRICTS
PART 6. OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION
CHAPTER 17. SPECIFIC OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES
ARTICLE 8. PUBLIC SCHOOL SAFETY LAW

N.J.S.A. 18A:17-46

18A:17-46. Act of violence; report by school employee; notice of action taken; annual report

Any school employee observing or having direct knowledge from a participant or victim of an act of violence shall, in accordance with standards established by the commissioner, file a report describing the incident to the school principal in a manner prescribed by the commissioner, and copy of same shall be forwarded to the district superintendent.

The principal shall notify the district superintendent of schools of the action taken regarding the incident. Annually, at a public hearing in October, the superintendent of schools shall report to the board of education all acts of violence and vandalism which occurred during the previous school year. The proceedings of the public hearing shall be transcribed and kept on file by the board of education, which shall make the transcript available to the public. Verification of the annual report on violence and vandalism shall be part of the State's monitoring of the school district, and the State Board of Education shall adopt regulations that impose a penalty on a school employee who knowingly falsifies the report. A board of education shall provide ongoing staff training, in cooperation with the Department of Education, in fulfilling the reporting requirements pursuant to this section. The majority representative of the school employees shall have access monthly to the number and disposition of all reported acts of school violence and vandalism.

The board of education shall file the transcript of the public hearing with the Division of Student Services in the Department of Education by November 1. The division shall review the transcript to ensure compliance with this section of law. The costs of staff training and transcribing the public hearing and printing the transcript shall be paid by the Department of Education.

CREDIT(S)

L.1982, c. 163, § 1, eff. Oct. 28, 1982. Amended by [L.2001, c. 299, § 1, eff. Jan. 2, 2002](#).

<[General Materials \(GM\)](#) - References, Annotations, or Tables>

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2003 Electronic Update

Executive Order:

Establishes Character Education Commission. McGreevey Executive Order No. 9, Feb. 27, 2002.

1999 Main Volume

Prior Laws: C. 18A:4-29.2 (L.1978, c. 183, § 2).

Title of Act:

An Act concerning education, requiring the commissioner to monitor the incidence of violence in the public schools, supplementing Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes and repealing P.L.1978, c. 183 (C. 18A:4-29.1 et seq.). L.1982, c. 163.

N. J. S. A. 18A:17-46, NJ ST 18A:17-46

Current through L.2003, c. 144